

3rd Grade Cultural Diversity Inquiry

# How Does Our Culture Make Us Similar and Different?



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## Guiding Questions

1. What is culture?
2. How does history impact cultures around the world today?
3. How are the lives of children similar and different in global communities?



### 3rd Grade Cultural Diversity Inquiry

## How Does Our Culture Make Us Similar and Different?

<b>Arkansas Social Studies Framework Student Learning Expectations</b>	<p>G.9.3.2 Describe effects of cultural characteristics on population distribution in a specific place.</p> <p>G.10.3.2 Explain effects of the movement and distribution of people, goods, and ideas on communities using a variety of sources (print and digital sources, geographic representations)</p> <p>G.10.3.3 Describe diverse groups and reasons why they settled in Arkansas (push-pull-factors)</p> <p>✓ <b>Gathering, Using, and Interpreting Evidence</b> ✓ <b>Chronological Reasoning and Causation</b></p> <p>✓ <b>Comparison and Contextualization</b> ✓ <b>Geographic Reasoning</b> ✓ <b>Civic Participation</b></p>
<b>Staging the Question</b>	Discuss the concept of “culture,” by brainstorming responses to the question, “what does culture look like?”

Guiding Question 1	Guiding Question 2	Guiding Question 3 Research
Understand	Understand	Assess
What is culture?	How does history impact cultures around the world today?	How are the lives of children similar and different in global communities?
Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task
Complete a Vocabulary Map using the word “Culture”	Identify examples of historical influences on present-day cultures around the world on a three-column chart.	Write a paragraph that compares and contrasts aspects of daily life for kids in several world communities.
Featured Source	Featured Sources	Featured Source
<b>Source A:</b> “Discovering Culture”	<p><b>Source A:</b> “Brazil Today—Carnaval! The Celebration of Brazil”</p> <p><b>Source B:</b> Excerpts from <i>Exploring Countries: France</i></p> <p><b>Source C:</b> “The Ancient Art of Rangoli”</p>	<b>Source A:</b> <i>Day in the Life</i>

<b>Summative Performance Task</b>	<b>ARGUMENT</b> How does our culture make us similar and different? Construct an argument supported with evidence that addresses the compelling question.
<b>Taking Informed Action</b>	<b>ACT</b> Plan for and host a cultural-diversity fair for the other third-grade classes.



## Overview

### Inquiry Description

This inquiry engages third graders in expanding their understandings of diverse cultures. The compelling question “How does our culture make us similar and different?” is intellectually respectful of students who, by their nature, are interested in people and their similarities and differences. It allows for engagement with several social studies disciplines as students examine diverse cultures and histories around the globe.

This inquiry embeds the Taking Informed Action sequence throughout. The *understand* element is developed through Guiding Questions 1 and 2 while the *assess* element is represented in Guiding Question 3. The *act* piece, the planning and hosting of a cultural diversity fair for other third-grade classes, can be done in addition to, or as a substitute for, the Summative Performance Task.

In addition to the Key Idea listed earlier, this inquiry highlights the following Conceptual Understandings:

- (3.5a) The structure and activities of families and schools share similarities and differences across world communities.
- (3.5b) Communities around the world can be diverse in terms of their members, languages spoken, customs and traditions, and religious beliefs and practices. People in world communities celebrate various holidays and festivals.

NOTE: This inquiry is expected to take four to six 30-minute class periods. The inquiry time frame could expand if teachers think their students need additional instructional experiences (i.e., Guiding Questions, formative performance tasks, and featured sources). Teachers are encouraged to adapt the inquiries to meet the needs and interests of their particular students. Resources can also be modified as necessary to meet individualized education programs (IEPs) or Section 504 Plans for students with disabilities.

### Structure of the Inquiry

In addressing the compelling question “How does our culture make us similar and different?” students work through a series of Guiding Questions, formative performance tasks, and featured sources in order to construct an argument with evidence from a variety of sources.

## Staging the Compelling Question

Because culture is such a complex concept, it would be useful to give students an open-ended opportunity to offer their initial ideas through a brainstorming activity whereby they respond to the question, “What does culture look



like?” Teachers should chart the students’ responses and return to them throughout the inquiry to see if they want to add to, delete from, or modify their list.

## Guiding Question 1

Guiding Question 1—“What is culture?”—addresses a key consideration in the third-grade curriculum of world communities and global citizenship. Students learn that culture is an umbrella term for social organization, customs and traditions, language, arts and literature, religion, forms of government, and economic systems. Featured Source A provides information about the concepts of culture, customs, and traditions. The formative performance task asks students to pull those ideas from the featured source and to construct a response to the Guiding Question.

NOTE: Lessons 2 and 3 from Unit 1 of Grade 3 NYS ELA Module 2B can be incorporated into this phase of the inquiry to extend learning and to include additional Common Core ELA objectives.

## Guiding Question 2

Guiding Question 2—“How does history impact cultures around the world today?”—drives the student inquiry deeper by allowing students to explore historical influences on present-day cultures. Featured Sources A, B, and C expose students to historical influences on culture today by highlighting cultural features of three countries—Brazil, France, and India. The formative performance task asks students use evidence from the featured sources to create a three-column chart identifying the culture studied, the historical influences evident, and present-day evidence of the historical influence on culture.

NOTE: Featured Source B, an excerpt from the book *Exploring Countries: France* by Rachel Grack, is used in Grade 3 NYS ELA Module 2B as part of the Unit 2 Assessment.

## Guiding Question 3

Guiding Question 3—“How are the lives of children similar and different in global communities?”—and the formative performance task associated with it offer a research opportunity for students to compare and contrast aspects of daily life for children in several world communities. Featured Source A is an online resource from which students can choose among 53 different countries and regions to explore. Teachers should direct students toward the “Day in the Life” sections (from the left-hand menu when a country/region is selected) where they can learn about the family, home, and school lives of real children around the world. After sufficient explorations of the source, students write a paragraph comparing and contrasting three cultures of their own choosing as the formative performance task.



## Summative Performance Task

Students draw upon understandings developed through the formative performance tasks to craft evidence-based arguments responding to the compelling question “How does our culture make us similar and different?” The argument can be presented through written expression or a combination of drawing and writing. To prepare for the crafting of an argument, students may gather their sources and notes and discuss in small groups the relationship between the Guiding Questions/featured sources and the compelling question.

Student arguments will likely vary, but could include any of the following:

- Our culture makes us different because there are a lot of different ways people celebrate history, holidays, music, and traditions.
- Our cultures can be similar because we might have things in common like going to school and spending time with our families, but our schools and family activities might be very different.
- Global communities have similar needs like food, shelter, clothing, education, and government.

Students have the opportunity to Take Informed Action by planning for and hosting a cultural-diversity fair for other third-grade classes. The *understand* element is developed through Guiding Questions 1 and 2 while the *assess* element is represented in Guiding Question 3. Students *act* by planning and hosting the fair. This task can be done in addition to, or as a substitute for, the Summative Performance Task.



## Guiding Question 1

### Featured Source

**Source A:** Expeditionary Learning, article about culture, customs, and traditions, “Discovering Culture,” 2013

### Discovering Culture

Culture refers to a group’s way of life, or how they do things. The culture of a community is the way of life for a group that has been passed from one generation to the next.

Every community in the world has a culture. Culture is reflected in how a community—a group of people—has lived in the past and how they live now. It is a collection of many things like the members of the community, languages spoken, customs and traditions, and religious beliefs and practices. These are preserved in the present, and given to future generations. From ancient civilizations to the present, there are ways to discover what a group of people believe in, what they value as important, and how they live their lives.

A custom is an accepted way of doing something or an accepted way of behaving that is special to a certain group, a certain place, or a certain time. It is something done regularly. Customs are one way to learn about a community’s culture. For example, in America when people meet for the first time, it is a custom to shake right hands firmly, make eye contact, and introduce yourself. It is also a custom in the United States to stand, face the flag, and place your right hand over your heart when the “Pledge of Allegiance” is recited. So many cultures have customs that are special ways of celebrating birthdays or specific ways to greet each other.

A tradition is a behavior or action that has been handed down from a previous generation. There are many different types of traditions. Examples include family traditions, social traditions, patriotic traditions, and religious traditions. The traditions of a group or community can tell a lot about their culture. Traditions can often relate to the way a holiday is celebrated. For example, May Day is a spring holiday celebrated in many countries in the northern hemisphere, and one May Day tradition is to dance in costume around a Maypole. The Matabele women in Zimbabwe, Africa, are known for their detailed beadwork. It is a tradition for this skill to be passed from generation to generation, and it helps them make a living.

Customs and traditions are some ways to find evidence of a community’s culture. Each of these captures part of ‘the story’ that allows us to know what a group of people believes in, what they value as important, and how they live their lives.



Pledge of Allegiance.

Courtesy of U.S. Department of Agriculture.





English tradition of dancing around the maypole.

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Fireworks.

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"Discovering Culture" from Expeditionary Learning Grade 3 ELA Curriculum. © 2013 by Expeditionary Learning. Used with permission.



## Guiding Question 2

### Featured Source

**Source A:** ReadWorks, article on life in Brazil, “Brazil Today—Carnaval! The Celebration of Brazil,” 2012

### Brazil Today: Carnaval! The Celebration of Brazil

Brazil’s warm climate and beautiful beaches attract people from all over the world. What else attracts people to Brazil? The country’s reputation for fun! During Carnaval, seven weeks before Easter, for four straight days, Brazil turns into one big party. It is Carnaval time!

Carnaval began similar to the tradition of Mardi Gras in the United States. Both started as a feast and celebration before the fasting of Lent. But today, Carnaval is not as much about religion as about fun and pleasure. People parade, dance, play music, and wear costumes and masks. Everyone catches the spirit of Carnaval. Bright colors are everywhere and people become more outgoing.

Carnaval combines many elements of Brazil’s heritage: masked balls from the Portuguese aristocrat tradition, music handed down through the ages from West Africans in Brazil, and paint and marching from the Native American tradition. People from every background and social class take part in Carnaval in one way or another.

One way to celebrate is through singing. Many people sing songs written for Carnaval as they parade. Here is a translation of the first simple words ever written for a Carnaval song. They are almost like a chant:

Hey, make way

I want to pass

I like parties

I can’t deny that

Part of the Carnaval is the *escolas de samba*. *Escolas de samba* are groups, or almost like clubs that perform together. They spend a lot of time during the whole year preparing for Carnaval. The exhibitions involve parades with breathtaking floats made of crepe paper, flowers, and other materials. There is also music. Each parade lasts about 90 minutes. Judges choose the best groups of floats and the best songs written each year. Often the songs have political or historical themes. They are fun, but they are also passionate and smart. The songs speak to the people of Brazil. Brazilians are very loyal to their favorite *escola*. People from the community pour time and effort into the *escola de samba* to make their parade the best, loudest, and most dazzling.

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## Guiding Question 2

### Featured Source

**Source B:** Rachel Grack, book chapter on life in France, *Exploring Countries: France* (excerpts), 2010



### Exploring Countries: France

**Did you Know?** The French are famous for a long, hard loaf of bread called a *baguette*. France has 35,000 bakeries where the French can buy bread, which is served with every meal.

### Food

Food is an important part of French culture. The midday meal, the largest meal of the day, is traditionally eaten with the entire family. It begins with an appetizer, or *hors d'oeuvre*. This might consist of sausage, soup, raw vegetables, or liver paste called *pâté*. The main dish is called the *entrée*. It usually features seafood stew, fried steak, or roasted chicken or lamb. The *entrée* is often served with side dishes such as *ratatouille*, a mixed vegetable dish. Dessert is often a plate of fruit and cheese.

French food varies widely between regions. Cooks in the French Mediterranean use olive oil, herbs and tomatoes in many dishes. Food in northwest France is made with butter and sour cream. Northeast France has strong German influences. Meals in this region often include sauerkraut. Seafood is commonly eaten along the French coasts.

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## Holidays

The French celebrate many holidays. The most famous French holiday is Mardi Gras. Many towns throw huge Mardi Gras carnivals that include floats and people in flashy costumes. The Feast of Kings, or *Fête des Rois*, is on January 6. The French celebrate this day with king cake. Most French people also celebrate Christmas.

The French enjoy a number of national holidays. On July 14, the French celebrate Bastille Day, which is Independence Day in France. Soldiers march in military parades to the beat of France's national anthem, *La Marseillaise*. At night, fireworks light up the sky while people dance in the streets.

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## Guiding Question 2

### Featured Source

**Source C:** Shruti Priya and Katherine Darrow, article about the Indian tradition of Rangoli, "The Ancient Art of Rangoli," *Calliope*, March 2013

### The Ancient Art of Rangoli

By Shruti Priya and Katherine Darrow

1. More than 5,000 years ago, people living in the Indus Valley of northern India decorated the floors and walls of their homes with elaborate designs of flowers, birds, or geometric patterns. This ancient tradition, known as *Rangoli*, is practiced today throughout India as an important part of festivals and celebrations. In southern India, women and children still make *Rangoli* every morning on the threshold of their homes. They perform this daily ritual to welcome guests and bring good luck to the family.

2. *Rang* is the Hindi word for "color," but throughout the country, different styles of *Rangoli* are known by other names. The brilliant, colored powders used to make *Rangoli* are made from finely ground rock powder, spices, and other kinds of dyes mixed with rice flour. Turmeric, a spice commonly used in Indian cooking, gives a bright yellow. Indigo is a deep blue made from the leaves of a shrub. Vermillion red is made from grinding up a mineral called cinnabar. Plain white rice flour is also part of the color spectrum in *Rangoli*.



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3. Festivals such as *Diwali*, or "Festival of Lights," call for a special *Rangoli* inviting Lakshmi, the Hindu goddess of wealth, to people's homes. Lakshmi is believed to visit households that have been well cleaned and beautifully decorated. The whole family helps to complete the big *Rangoli* by filling colors in the intricate patterns. A special impression of Lakshmi's footprint is made by dipping the side of a fist into the rice paste, and then adding toes using fingertips.

4. There are no fixed rules to making *Rangoli*. Why not try your hand at making one with ordinary materials that you have around the house.

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Priya, Shruti, and Katherine Darrow. "The Ancient Art of Rangoli." *Calliope* Mar. 2013: 34. by Carus Publishing Company. Reproduced with permission.





## Guiding Question 3

### Featured Source

**Source A:** Author unknown, website describing a typical day in the life of a child, “Day in the Life,” *Time for Kids around the World*, no date

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NOTE: The text below describes Charles Ispwapwa’s daily life. For other examples, select a country or region of interest and then select “Day in the Life” on the left-side menu.



### Day in the Life: Kenya

Ever wondered what it was like to grow up in Kenya? Read about this boy’s day and find out.

### Charles Ispwapwa

Hello! My name is Charles Ispwapwa. I’m 11 years old. I live in Kibera, a neighborhood in Nairobi, with my aunt and cousins.

**5:30 A.M.** My aunt wakes me up to get ready for school. I wash my face, brush my teeth and put on my school uniform.

**6:00 A.M.** For breakfast, I eat mandazi, which is fried dough in the shape of a donut. My aunt also makes me a cup of tea with milk.

**6:30 A.M.** My cousin and I walk to school together. It takes us 30 to 45 minutes to get there.

**7:15 A.M.** I arrive at school. The students are supposed to get to school early to get organized before the teacher arrives at 8:00. We pray and sing songs before our first lesson, which is math. We are learning multiplication.

**9:30 A.M.** We take our first break of the day. It is 15 minutes long. I run around and play tag with my friends. Then, it’s back to class for our next lesson. We are learning to read and write English words. After the lesson, we take another 15-minute break.

**11:45 A.M.** Today, instead of our usual Swahili lesson, my class is learning about hygiene. We listen to a lecture about how to brush our teeth and wash our hands properly.

**12:30 P.M.** Now it’s time for either arts and crafts or French lessons. French is difficult, but I like drawing houses, animals or people. I like to use lots of colors.



**12:45 P.M.** The school provides our lunch. Usually it's rice, ugali [cornmeal porridge] and chapati [fried dough] or potato chips.

**1:30 P.M.** For lunch, my teacher serves me a big bowl of mixed beans and corn. Some kids go home after lunch. But I, and others, pay extra to stay at school until 3:10. I take this opportunity to get extra help from my teacher. After school, I meet my cousin, and we walk home.

**4:00 P.M.** When I get home from school, I do my chores. I walk to a nearby well to collect water for my family to shower and cook with. I also shop for dinner and wash dishes. When I'm done, I play soccer with my friends.

**6:30 P.M.** After I do my homework, I have dinner with my aunt and my two cousins. We eat kale and ugali, which is cornmeal cooked with water to make a porridge. We drink water.

**7:30 P.M.** It's been a long day. I lie down on a mattress on the floor, curl up under a blanket and go to sleep. Good night!

Article available at <http://www.timeforkids.com/around-the-world>.

Photo © Sarah Elliott—Getty Images for TIME.